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POLITICAL INQUIRIES:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A

P L A N

FOR THE

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT

OF

S C H O O L S

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

BY

ROBERT CORAM.

*Author of some late Pieces in the Delaware Gazette, under
the Signature of BRUTUS.*

*Above all, watch carefully over the Education of your Children. It is from
public Schools, be assured, that come the wise Magistrates—the well
trained and courageous Soldiers—the good Fathers—the good
Husbands—the good Brothers—the good Friends—the
good Men.—RAYNAL.*

WILMINGTON:

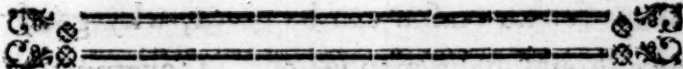
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*This Work is intended merely
to introduce a better Mode of
Education, than that generally
adopted in the Country Schools,
throughout the United States.*

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is serious truth, whatever may have been advanced by European writers to the contrary, that the aborigines of the American continent, have fewer vices, are less subject to diseases, and are a happier people, than the subjects of any government in the Eastern world.

From the first of these facts, may be drawn two important consequences.—First, that the proneness to vice, with which mankind have always been charged, and to check which, is the ostensible purpose of government, is entirely chimerical. Secondly, that vice, in civilized nations, is the effect of bad government. It is plain, if men are virtuous without laws, they may be virtuous with good laws;

laws; for no reason can be given, why good laws should make men vicious. Government is, no doubt, a very complicated machine; but vice in the subject, cannot be the mere consequence of complexity in the form of government: for if one good law would not necessarily produce vice, neither would one hundred. These truths are simple, but they are not the less useful.

Europeans have been taught to believe, that mankind have something of the Devil ingrafted in their nature, that they are naturally ferocious, vicious, revengeful, and as void of reason as brutes, &c. &c. Hence their sanguinary laws, which string a man to a gibbet, for the value of twenty pence. They first frame an hypothesis, by which they prove men to be wolves, and then treat them as if they really were such.

But notwithstanding the Europeans have proved men to be naturally wolves, yet they will

will assert that "men owe every thing to
 " education. The minds of children are like
 " blank paper, upon which you may write
 " any characters you please." Thus will
 they every day refute the fundamental princi-
 ples upon which their laws are built, and yet
 not grow a jot the wiser.

Whoever surveys the history of nations with a
 philosophic eye, will find that the civilized man
 in every stage of his civilization, and under
 almost every form of government, has always
 been a very miserable being. When we con-
 sider the very splendid advantages, which the
 citizen seems to possess; the grand scheme of
 christianity; the knowledge of sciences and
 of arts; the experience of all ages and na-
 tions, recorded in his libraries for a guide; how
 mortifying must it be to him, to reflect, that
 with all his boasted science and philosophy,
 he has made but a retrograde advance to hap-
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he, the citizen, by all his powers of refined and artificial intellect, could never reach.

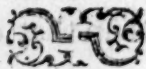
There must be some fundamental error, therefore, common to all civilized nations ; and this error appears to me to be in Education. In the savage state, education is perfect. In the civilized state, education is the most imperfect part of the whole scheme of government, or civilization ; or rather, it is not immediately connected with either : for I know of no modern governments, except perhaps the New-England states, in which education is incorporated with the government, or regulated by it.

In the savage state, as I said before, the system of education is perfect. To explain this, it will be necessary to define the word *Education*, or at least what I mean by it.— Education, then, means the instruction of youth in certain rules of conduct, by which they will be enabled to support themselves when they come to age, and to know
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the obligations they are under to that society of which they constitute a part. Nature, then, in the savage state, is the unerring instructor of their youth in the first or principal part of education; for, when their bodily powers are complete, that part of education which relates to their support, is complete also. When they can subdue the wild animals, they can procure subsistence. The second, or less essential part, is taught by their parents: their laws, or rather *customs*, being few and simple, are easily remembered and understood. But the unfortunate civilized man, to obtain a livelihood, must be acquainted with some art or science; in which he is neither instructed by nature, by government, by his parents, or often times by any means at all. He is then absolutely unable to procure himself subsistence, without violating some law: and as to the obligations he is under to society, he knows indeed but very little, if any thing about them.—In this state of the case, the situation of the civilized man, is infinitely worse than that of the savage, nay,
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worse than that of the brute creation ; for the birds have nests, the foxes have holes, and all animals, in their wild state, have permanent means of subsistence, but the civilized man has no where to lay his head : he has neither habitation nor food ; but forlorn and out cast, he perishes for want, and starves in the midst of universal plenty.

To alleviate, therefore, in some measure, the miseries of this unhappy being, is the intent of the following sheets. And in pursuit of an object of such importance, the author shall not be afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead him. As an American, he asserts his claim to this privilege ; and he hopes it may be allowed him upon the double score of his birth-right, and the task he has undertaken to plead the cause of humanity.



Political Inquiries, &c.

CHAP. I.

Inquiry into the Origin of Government; and a comparative View of the Subjects of European Governments, with the Aborigines of America.

NO question has puzzled philosophers of all ages, more than the Origin of Government. The wants and vices of mankind, have been generally held out to be the causes of all the good and bad governments, with which mankind have alternately been blessed or cursed, from the earliest ages to the present day. But there is no satisfactory reason to believe, that government originated from either of those causes. We can never believe it originated from his wants, considering the very small proportion of
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cultivated land, in proportion to the uncultivated at this day, in every part of the globe, some small islands excepted; nor will his vices afford a better solution of the question, since the savages of North-America, are infinitely more virtuous than the inhabitants of the most polished nations of Europe.

How the first government originated, we are entirely in the dark. Scripture is silent on this head; and all that we know, is that Cain founded a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch. As to the origin of Modern Governments; they seem chiefly to have been founded by conquest: their origin is however, involved in much obscurity.

Since then we are unable to discover the origin of government, from the impenetrable obscurity in which it is involved, let us consider its end, as equally applicable to our purpose.—The end of government, we are told, is public good; by which is to be understood, the happiness of the community. The great body of the people in Europe are unhappy, not to say miserable: there needs no other argument, to prove that all the European governments have been founded upon wrong principles; since the means used have not produced the end intended.

The following description from the Abbe Raynal, may, perhaps be with truth applied to the body of the people throughout Europe:—

“ In our provinces, the vassal, or free mercenary, digs and ploughs the whole year round, lands that are not his own, and whose produce does not belong to him; and he is even happy, if his labour procures him a share of the crops he has sown and reaped. Observed and harrassed, by a hard and restless landlord, who grudges him the very straw on which he rests his weary limbs; the wretch is daily exposed to diseases, which, joined to his poverty, make him wish for death, rather than for an expensive cure, followed by infirmities and toil. Whether tenant or subject, he is doubly a slave; if he has a few acres, his lord comes and gathers them where he has not sown; if he has but a yoke of oxen, or a pair of horses, he must employ them in the public service; if he has nothing but his person, the prince takes him for a soldier. Every where he meets with masters, and always with oppression.”—
Let us now consider the state of the American Indians.

This inquiry is attended with more difficulty, than at first sight would appear. Indeed, if the present race of American Indians should shortly become

become extinct, it would be impossible for posterity to form any judgment of them, whether they were a species of Ouran Outang, or rational beings. The European libraries have been stuffed with such monstrous caricatures of the American, that they have influenced their ablest philosophers; and Raynal and Buffon have both endeavored to account for the supposed defects in the man of the western world. Excepting Clavigero's history of Mexico, the short account given by Mr. Jefferson, Carver's travels, the history of the five nations, and Bancroft's history of Guiana, I do not recollect an account of the American, which deserves the name of history. The translations from French and Spanish writers, are generally full of the most glaring prejudice and absurdity. I once saw an history of Louisiana, translated from the French, in which some curious person had, in a fine hand in the margin, refuted almost the whole of the text. And for a specimen of Spanish history, take the following from the history of California, by Miguel Venegas: "The characteristics of the Californians, as well as of all the other Indians, are stupidity, an insensibility, want of knowledge and reflection, inconstancy, impetuosity, and blindness of appetite; an excessive sloth and abhorrence of all labor and fatigue, an incessant love of pleasure and amusement of every kind, how-
ever

ever trifling or brutal; pusillanimity and relaxity; and in fine, a most wretched want of every thing which constitutes the real man, and renders him rational, inventive, tractable, and useful to himself and society. It is not easy for Europeans, who never were out of their own country, to conceive an adequate idea of those people. For even in the least frequented corners of the globe, there is not a nation so stupid, of such contracted ideas, and so wretched both in body and mind, as the unhappy Californians."

Some of the features of this miserable picture, are of so heterogeneous a cast, that one can hardly be induced to believe them copied from the same original. Stupidity, excessive sloth, and abhorrence of all labor and fatigue, but ill agrees with impetuosity, and incessant love of pleasure. I shall not be at the trouble of refuting this banter upon history, only to be equalled in absurdity, by the philosophical researches of Mr. De Paw; but will content myself with quoting a little more from Mr. Miguel Venegas, and leave the reader to judge for himself:

" However, in the Californians are seen few of those bad dispositions for which the other Americans are infamous; no inebriating liquors
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are used among them ; and the several members of a rancheria live in great harmony among themselves, and peaceably with others. What little every one has, is safe from theft. Quarrels are rarely known among them. All their malice and rage they reserve for their enemies ; and so far are they from obstinacy, harshness and cruelty, that nothing could exceed their docility and gentleness ; consequently they are easily persuaded to good or evil. They make their boats of the bark of trees ; and every part of the workmanship, the shaping, joining, and covering them, is admired even by Europeans. The men likewise make nets for fishing, for gathering fruits, and for carrying the children, and even those worn by the women. But in this particular, they shew such exquisite skill, making them of so many different colors, sizes and variety of workmanship, that it is not easy to describe them." Father Taravel, says, " I can affirm, that of all the nets I ever saw in Europe and New Spain, none are comparable to these, either in whiteness, the mixture of the other colors, or the strength and workmanship in which they represent a vast variety of figures." I hope the contradiction and absurdity are manifest.

The citizens of the United States differ as widely in their opinions, and in many instances seem

seem as much prejudiced against the Indians, as the Europeans. Mutual jealousies among those who reside near the frontiers, the ferocity with which the Indians conduct their wars, but principally the numerous forged accounts published in our news-papers, of horrid murders perpetrated by them; have given the citizens of these states such an antipathy against the Indians, as will not easily be removed. I travelled with one of Mr. M'Gillivray's men from Philadelphia to New-York, last summer, and had the mortification to see him insulted in almost every public house at which we stopped on our route. One of the landlords did not scruple to tell him, that he, the landlord, would as leave shoot an Indian as a rattle snake. And take the following account from the Delaware Gazette:

“ Extract of a letter from Sunbury, Northumberland county, Pennsylvania, dated November 13, 1790.—

“ One of the men who murdered the Indians at Pine Creek, was tried on Saturday evening; and though a number of witnesses clearly proved the hand he had in perpetrating the horrid deed, and the confession of his counsel at the bar, which confirmed it; yet, notwithstanding

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an express charge from the judges, to bring him in guilty, the jury, in a few minutes, returned with a verdict in his favour, and a subscription to pay the costs of suit, that he might be set at liberty. And all this from a most absurd idea, which the Attorney General could not, with all his endeavours, beat out of them, that the crime was not the same to kill an Indian, as a white man. For some minutes the Chief Justice was struck with astonishment. How the state can pacify the Indians now, Heaven knows; while at this moment, the other murderers are at large in this county, and none will arrest them."

It is said that the inhabitants of Canada, and the other French settlements, are very seldom troubled by the Indians. The French government has kept a watchful eye over the conduct of its subjects, and never suffered any injury done to the Indians to pass unpunished. It is indeed in vain to expect peace with those people, while the present rancor, too visible in the conduct of the citizens of those states continues. But as this is rather foreign to my present purpose, I shall proceed with what I have to offer on the subject of the Aborigines of America, from Carver's travels, and Bancroft's history of Guiana, as the least prejudiced testimony, applicable to the present purpose, which has fell under my observation.

The Indians, says Mr. Carver, in their common state, are strangers to all distinction of property, except in the articles of domestic use, which every one considers as his own, and increases as circumstances may admit. They are extremely liberal to each other, and supply the deficiency of their friends, with any superfluity of their own. In dangers, they readily give assistance to those of their band who stand in need of it, without any expectation of return, except of those just rewards which are always conferred by the Indians on merit. Governed by the plain and equitable laws of nature, every one is rewarded solely according to his deserts; and their equality of condition, manners and privileges, with that constant and sociable familiarity, which prevails throughout every Indian nation, animates them with a pure and truly patriotic spirit, which tends to the general good of the society to whom they belong. If any of their neighbours are bereaved by death, or by an enemy, of their children, those who are possessed of the greatest number of slaves, supply the deficiency; and those are adopted by them, and treated in every respect as if they really were the children of the person to whom they are presented. The Indians, except those who live adjoining to the European colonies, can form to themselves no idea of the

value of money ; they consider it, when they are made acquainted with the uses to which it is applied by other nations, as the source of innumerable evils. To it they attribute all the mischiefs which are prevalent among Europeans : such as treachery, plunderings, devastation and murder. They esteem it irrational, that one man should be possessed of a greater quantity than another ; and are amazed that any honor should be annexed to the possession of it. But that the want of this useless metal should be the cause of depriving persons of their liberty, and that on account of this partial distribution of it, great numbers should be immured within the dreary walls of a prison, cut off from that society of which they constitute a part, exceeds their belief. Nor do they fail, on hearing this part of the European system of government related, to charge the institutors of it with a total want of humanity, and to brand them with the names of savages and brutes.

The following character of the Caribbee Indians, is taken from Bancroft's Guiana : " In reviewing the manners of those Indians, some few particulars excepted, I survey an amiable picture of primeval innocence and happiness ; which arises chiefly from the fewness of their wants, and
their

their universal equality. The latter destroys all distinctions among them, except those of age and personal merit, and promotes the ease, harmony and freedom of their mutual conversation and intercourse. The fewness and simplicity of their wants, with the abundance of means for their supply, and the ease with which they are acquired, render all division of property useless. Each amicably participates the ample blessings of an extensive country, without reviling his neighbour, or interrupting his happiness. This renders all governments and all laws unnecessary; as in such a state, there can be no temptations to dishonesty, fraud, injustice, or violence, or indeed any desires which may not be gratified with innocence; and that chimerical proneness to vice, which among civilized nations, is thought to be a natural propensity, has no existence in a state of nature like this, where every one perfectly enjoys the blessings of his native freedom and independency, without any restraint or fear. To acquire the art of dispensing with all imaginary wants, and contenting ourselves with the real conveniencies of life, is the noblest exertion of reason, and a most useful acquisition, as it elevates the mind above the vicissitudes of fortune. Socrates justly observes, that "those who want least, approach nearest to the gods, who want nothing." The simplicity, however, which is
so

so apparent in the manners of those Indians, is not the effect of a philosophical self-denial, but of their ignorance of more refined enjoyments, which however produces effects equally happy with those which result from the most austere philosophy; and their manners present an emblem of the fabled elysian fields, where individuals need not the assistance of each other, but yet preserve a constant intercourse of love and friendship.

O FORTUNATI NIMIUM, BONA SI SUA NORINT. VIRG."

"It is doubtless," says the immortal Raynal, "of great importance to posterity, to record the manners of savages. From this source, perhaps, we have derived all our improvements in moral philosophy. Former metaphysicians sought for the origin of society, in those very societies which had been long established. Supposing men guilty of crimes, in order that they may have the merit of giving them saviours; blinding their eyes, in order that they may become their guides and masters, they call *mysterious*, *supernatural*, and *divine*, what is only the operation of time, ignorance, weakness and chicanery. But after perceiving, that social institutions neither originated from natural wants, nor from religious opinions; since many nations live independent without any worship,

worship, they discovered that all corruptions, both in morals and legislation, arose from society itself; and that vice originally proceeded from legislators, who generally instituted laws more for their own emolument, than public good; or whose views towards equity and right, were perverted by the ambition of their successors, or by the alteration of times and manners. This discovery has already thrown great light upon the subject, though it is still to mankind but as the dawn of a fine day. Its opposition to established opinions, prevents it from suddenly producing those immense benefits which it will confer on posterity; and this latter circumstance ought to give consolation to the present generation. But however this may be, we may assert with confidence, that the ignorance of savages has contributed greatly to enlighten polished nations."

In the comparative view of the civilized man and the savage, the most striking contrast is the division of property. To the one, it is the source of all his happiness: to the other, the fountain of all his misery. By holy writ we are informed, that God gave to man dominion over the earth, the living creatures, and the herbs; human laws have, however, limited this jurisdiction to certain orders or classes of men; the rest are to feed upon air if they can, or fly to another world
for

for subsistence. This parcelling out to individuals, what was intended for the general stock of society, leads me to inquire farther into the nature and origin of property. I am not quite so visionary, as to expect that the members of any civilized community will listen to an equal division of lands: had that been the object of this work, the author had infallibly lost his labor. But a substitute, and perhaps the only one, is highly practicable, as will hereafter appear.

C H A P. II.

Inquiry into the Origin of Property; and a Refutation of Blackstone's Doctrine on that Subject.

TH E R E is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination, says Dr. Blackstone, and engages the affections of mankind, as the right of property; or that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of this world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe. And yet there are very few, that will give themselves the trouble to consider the original and foundation of this right. Pleased,
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as we are, with the possession, we seem afraid to look back to the means by which it was acquired, as if fearful of some defect in our title; or at best, we rest satisfied with the decisions of the laws in our favor, without examining the reason or authority upon which those laws have been built. We think it enough that our title is derived by the grant of the former proprietor, by descent from our ancestors, or by the last will and testament of the dying owner; not caring to reflect that (accurately and strictly speaking) there is no foundation in nature, or in natural law, why a set of words upon parchment, should convey the dominion of land; why the son should have a right to exclude his fellow creatures from a determinate spot of ground, because his father had done so before him; or why the occupier of a particular field or of a jewel, when lying on his death bed, and no longer able to maintain possession, should be entitled to tell the rest of the world, which of them should enjoy it after him. These inquiries, it must be confessed, would be useless, and even troublesome, in common life. It is well, if the mass of mankind will obey the laws, when made, without scrutinizing too nicely into the reasons of making them. But when law is to be considered, not only as matter of practice, but also as a rational science, it cannot be improper or useless to examine

mine more deeply the rudiments and grounds of those positive constitutions of society."

Doctor Blackstone seems to have been extremely cautious how he ventured upon his inquiry into the origin of property, as if fearful of some defect in his title ; and his caution has, notwithstanding his profound sagacity, evidently run him into contradiction and absurdity. He tells us, in his chapter on the study of the law, that " every subject is interested in the preservation of the laws ; it is therefore" says he, " incumbent upon every man, to be acquainted with those at least with which he is immediately concerned, lest he incur the censure of living in society, without knowing the obligations which it lays him under." And in the part we have just now quoted, he obliquely censures the conduct of the generality of mankind, who, he says, will not give themselves the trouble to consider the original and foundation of the right of property. But when he reflects upon the probable consequences of a rational investigation of this subject, he flies his ground. " These inquiries," says he, " it must be owned would be useless, and even troublesome in common life. It is well, if the mass of mankind will obey the laws when made, without scrutinizing too nicely into the reasons of making them." But though the mass of

of mankind are prohibited to scrutinize too nicely into the reasons of making laws, it seems that it is not improper for those who consider law as a matter of practice, and a rational science, to examine more deeply into their rudiments and grounds. That is, in plain English, lawyers may know the obligations of society; but the people not. Thus it was when corrupt priests despised the ordinances of a just God, defiled his altars with unhallowed sacrifices, and stained them with innocent blood, they hid their creed beneath the impenetrable veil of a dead language, that their iniquity might not be detected.

Thus it is, that those who should direct the opinions of mankind, descend to contemptible sophistry and contradiction, turn traitors to their own principles, apostates to the sacred cause of truth, and while they pretend that their system of law is founded upon principles of equity, tell us in plain terms that it will not bear investigation. The right to exclusive property, is a question of great importance, and of all others, perhaps, deserves the most candid and equitable solution. Such a solution will afford a foundation for laws, which will totally eradicate from the civilized man, a very large portion of those vices which such legislators as Dr. Blackstone pretend to be natural to the human race. One deplorable

iniquity at least, which has filled the earth with tears, and the hearts of all good men with deep regret; I mean the slave trade, could never have existed among any people who had distinct ideas of property: but this subject has been treated of in such an obscure, vague, and contradictory manner by the European lawyers, that it is impossible to determine by them, what is property, and what is not.

“In the beginning of the world,” says Dr. Blackstone, “we are informed by holy writ, the all bountiful Creator gave to man ‘dominion over all the earth, and over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.’ This is the only true and solid foundation of man’s dominion over external things, whatever airy metaphysical notions may have been started by fanciful writers upon that subject.” The Doctor, not the least fanciful of metaphysical writers, quotes the text in Genesis, as a demonstration of his creed, to tell us that he believes in the Bible, which is in some measure necessary, as many of his arguments militate against such belief. If then the text in Genesis is the only true and solid foundation of man’s dominion over external things, every son and daughter of Adam is co-heir to this paternal inheritance, for the gift was

was made in common to the whole race of Adam. How then have part of mankind forfeited their right to the bounties of Providence? Or from what source does the monopoly of lands originate; since it is plain it cannot be derived from the text in Genesis? The Doctor indeed, tells us, that "the earth, and all things thereon, are the general property of all mankind, exclusive of other beings from the immediate gift of the Creator. And while the earth continued bare of inhabitants, it is reasonable to suppose, that all was in common among them, and that every one took from the public stock to his own use, such things as his immediate necessities required." And why not take from the public stock, when men multiplied? The command from the Creator was, increase and multiply. And must men then forfeit their right to the bounties of Providence, by acting in obedience to this precept? Or does Dr. Blackstone suppose that the earth can support only a part of mankind, and that the rest live upon air, light, fire or water, the only inheritance he has left them. It is plain, if the earth supports its inhabitants in the present unequal division of property, it will support them under an equal division. "These general notions of property," continues the Doctor, "were then sufficient to answer all the purposes of human life." That is, the solid foundation of man's dominion over external

ternal things, is a notion : this notion was, however, sufficient to answer all the purposes of human life ; “ and might still have answered them,” continues the Doctor, “ had it been possible for mankind to have remained in a state of primeval simplicity, as may be collected from the manners of many American nations, when first discovered by the Europeans.” It is upwards of 5000 years since the creation of the world. At the creation, men were in a state of primeval simplicity ; the American Indians are at this day in a state of primeval simplicity ; ergo, it is not possible for men to remain in a state of primeval simplicity. Here is logic elegantly displayed ! Thus it is that the sophistry of this English doctor flies before the test of investigation. It is therefore possible for men to remain in a state of primeval simplicity, since some of them are so at this day ; unless indeed the Doctor supposes the Indians to be the offspring of a creation subsequent to Adam. This primeval simplicity, the Doctor supposes, was the case with the ancient Europeans, according to the memorials of the golden age. “ *Erant omnia communia et indivisa omnibus, veluti unum cunctis patrimonium esset.*” Not,” says the Doctor, “ that this communion of goods seems ever to have been applicable, even in the earliest ages, to aught but the substance of the thing ; nor could it be extended to the use of it.” Why not ? Let us translate

translate the passage. All things were common and undivided to all, even as one inheritance might be to all. The sense of this passage is so obvious and plain, that a person could hardly think it possible to be misunderstood; but Dr. Blackstone is determined to understand it, not as common sense, but as unintelligible jargon. By a peculiar application of the participle *indivisa*, the Doctor infers, that the community of goods could not be extended to the use of such goods; which is making downright nonsense of the sentence: it is making the patrimony left in such manner, that not a single heir can enjoy the least use or benefit of it at all. Why should so much stress be laid on the participle *indivisa*, in the first part of the sentence, when the second part of the sentence is explanatory of the first? The goods were left *communia & indivisa*; but in what manner? *veluti unum cunctis patrimonium esset*: even as one inheritance might be to all. The Doctor appears designedly obscure in this very paragraph, and seems rather desirous to perplex his reader, than to throw any light upon the subject. "For by the law of nature and reason, continues the Doctor, he who first began to use a thing, acquired therein a kind of transient property, that lasted so long as he was using it, and no longer: or to speak with greater precision, the right of possession continued for the same time only, that
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the act of possession lasted. Thus the ground was in common, and no part of it was the permanent property of any man in particular: yet whoever was in the occupation of any determinate spot of it for rest, for shade, or the like, acquired, for the time, a sort of ownership, from which it would have been unjust, and contrary to the law of nature, to have driven him by force: but the instant that he quitted the use or occupation of it, another might seize it without injustice." According to this vague account of natural law, it appears that men had a right to that quantity of ground which happened to be in immediate contact with their feet, when standing up; with their backsides, when sitting; and with their body, when lying down; and no more. No provision is made for agriculture: indeed it would not have suited the Doctor to have allowed the existence of agriculture at that period of the world, for reasons which will hereafter appear.

Any person possessed of common sense, and some erudition, who was not previously bent upon establishing a favorite system at the expence of truth, might give us a rational account in what manner property should be regulated, under the law of nature. Such a person would probably say, all things subject to the dominion of man, may be included in two classes, land and movables;

bles; the rational foundation of the tenure of each is labor. Thus fruit growing on a tree was common; but when collected it became the exclusive property of the collector: land uncultivated, was common; but when cultivated, it became the exclusive possession of the cultivator. Men then according to the laws of nature, had an exclusive property in movables, and an exclusive possession in lands; both which were founded on labor, and bounded by it. For as labor employed in the collection of fruit could give an exclusive right, only to the fruit so collected; so labor in the soil, could give exclusive possession only to the spot so labored. But this kind of reasoning, would by no means suit Dr. Blackstone. "But," continues the doctor, "when mankind increased in number, craft and ambition, it became necessary to entertain conceptions of more permanent dominion, and to appropriate to individuals, not the immediate use only, but the very substance of the thing to be used." Query, could a man eat an apple, without entertaining conceptions of permanent dominion over the substance? Those conceptions existed then anterior to the increase of men in number, craft, and ambition, and were not the consequence of it. "Otherwise, continues the Doctor, innumerable tumults must have arisen, and the good order of the world been continually broken and disturbed, while a variety of persons

ons were striving who should get the first occupation of the same thing, or disputing which of them had actually gained it." From a system so vague as the Doctor's, and which he would pawn upon us for natural law, nothing but disputes could be expected, for nothing is determinate. His futile distinctions between the use of a thing, and the substance of a thing, and his notions of possession, are truly ridiculous. But those contests for occupaney, this mighty bug-bear, so fatal to the good order of the world, we can easily prove to be a mere phantom of the Doctor's brain; like the raw head and bloody bones with which ignorant nurses scare their children, it has no existence in nature.

As labor constitutes the right of property in moveables, and the right of possession in lands, it is evident, no disputes could arise merely from the nature of the right, for before labor was employed, there could be no right to squabble about, and after labor was employed, the right was completely vested. In fact, the whole of Blackstone's chapter on property, was artfully contrived to countenance the monopoly of lands as held in Europe. "When men increased in number, craft and ambition, it became necessary to entertain conceptions of more permanent dominion." If the Doctor means any thing, he means, that
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more permanent dominion was established, as a check to craft and ambition ; or in other words, that the laws vested a permanent property in lands in some persons, to prevent their being dispossessed by unruly individuals. But this clearly demonstrates, the Doctor to be as ignorant of the affections of the human heart, as he is of natural law. For a community of lands is the most effectual check which human wisdom could devise, against the ambition of individuals. What is the civilized man's ambition? to procure a property in the soil. But there is no such ambition among savages; for no man, civilized or savage, is ambitious of what is common to every man: land is common among savages; therefore they set no value upon it. In most civilized nations, land is held only by a few, and also made essential to the qualification of candidates for public offices: hence, to possess property in lands, is the ambition of civilized nations,

But continues the Doctor, "As human life also grew more and more refined, abundance of conveniences were contrived, to render it more easy and agreeable, as habitations for shelter and safety, and raiment for warmth and decency. But no man would be at the trouble to provide either, so long as he had only an *usufructuary* property in them, which was to cease the instant that he

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quitted

quitted possession ; if as soon as he walked out of his tent, or pulled off his garment, the next stranger who came by, would have a right to inhabit the one, and wear the other." If his wise head would have suffered him to reason, and not sophisticate, Dr. Blackstone would have found that there never was, nor could be an *usufructuary* property in a garment or a house ; the property in this case, was from its nature always absolute. For a house or a garment in *statu quo*, is no production of the earth, and was certainly never considered as a part of the general stock of society. The materials of which the house or the garment was formed, might have been common stock ; but when by manual labor, or dexterity, the materials became converted into a house or a garment, it became the exclusive property of the maker. And this is not merely a scholastic or speculative distinction ; but a distinction founded in nature, and well known to the American Indians. " The Indians, says Carver, are strangers to all distinction of property, except in the articles of domestic use, which every one considers as his own." And this miserable sophist, Dr. Blackstone, knew better : he knew that a house or a garment, could not be usufructuary property ; for he establishes the position, which will hereafter appear, that "bodily labour, bestowed upon any subject, which before lay in
common

common to all men, gives the fairest and most reasonable title to exclusive property therein."

It is a little surprising, if any thing from Dr. Blackstone can surprize us, that he will not suffer men to have been so well provided for, under the law of nature, as the brute creation. "For, says he, the brute creation, to whom every thing else was in common, maintained a kind of permanent property in their dwellings, especially for the protection of their young; that the birds of the air had nests; and the beasts of the fields had caverns: the invasion of which, they esteemed a very flagrant injustice, and would sacrifice their lives to preserve them." The argument, therefore, of the necessity of more permanent dominion than was exercised under the law of nature, to secure a man's right to his house or garment, is totally false; seeing that not an usufructuary, but an absolute and exclusive property, was vested in him by the laws of nature. "And there can be no doubt," continues the Doctor, "that movables of every kind became sooner appropriated than the permanent substantial soil, partly because they were susceptible of a long occupancy, which might be continued for months together, without any sensible interruption, and at length by usage, ripen into an established right; but principally because few of them
could

could be fit for use till improved and meliorated, by the bodily labor of the occupant ; which bodily labor bestowed upon any subject, which before lay in common to all men, is universally allowed to give the fairest and most reasonable title to an exclusive property therein." But movables never were common stock, for by the very act by which they become movables, they become absolute and exclusive property. Thus fruit growing on a tree, was not movable until collected ; but when collected, it became absolute and exclusive property. A tree standing, was not movable ; but when cut down, it became exclusive property. Again, the animal creation could not be esteemed movables, until they were caught ; but when caught, they became exclusive property.

"As the world by degrees, grew more populous, it daily became more difficult to find out new spots to inhabit, without encroaching upon former occupants ; and by constantly occupying the same individual spot, the fruits of the earth were consumed, and its spontaneous produce destroyed, without any provision for a future supply or succession. It therefore became necessary to pursue some regular method of providing a constant subsistence and this necessity produced, or at least promoted and encouraged the art of agriculture." The Doctor had well nigh forgot his bible

bible. He should have recollected, that the first man born was a tiller of the ground, and agriculture therefore nearly coeval with the creation. And although it may be objected that the art was lost in the deluge, yet we are certain, that it was revived in the person of Noah, who, we are informed in the 9th Genesis, "began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard." The President Goguet, in his origin of laws, arts and sciences, teaches much the same doctrine with Dr. Blackstone; it may therefore be necessary to attend to him also. "There was a time," says M. Goguet, "when mankind derived their whole subsistence from the fruits which the earth produced spontaneously, from their hunting, fishing and their flocks. Such was the ancient manner of living, till agriculture was introduced; in this manner several nations still live, as the Scythians, Tartars, Arabians, savages, &c." By savages, M. Goguet means, the aborigines of America; and here he is clearly mistaken: for agriculture is known and practised by every Indian tribe throughout the continent of America. Maize or Indian corn is a grain peculiar to this continent, and we have never heard of its growing wild; it must therefore have been cultivated by the aborigines of the continent. From the multitude of authorities which M. Goguet cites, when he treats of the savages, one would conclude

conclude that he had better information concerning them, than of the Tartars, Arabians and Scythians; and that if he is mistaken in regard to the savages, he may also be mistaken concerning the others. But as the authors of false theories generally contradict themselves, so M. Goguet tells us that "Homer, in *Odyss. L. vi. 10*, says, that in those remote ages, it was one of the first cares of those who formed new establishments, to divide the lands among the members of the colony. And the Chinese say, that Gin Hoand, one of their first kings, who reigned 2000 years before the vulgar era, divided the whole of his lands into nine parts; one of which was destined for dwelling, and the other eight for agriculture—*Martini hist. de la Chine*. And by the history of Peru, we find that their first Incas took great pains in distributing their lands among their subjects—*Accost hist. des Ind.*" But further, M. Goguet tells us that agriculture introduced *land marks*, the practice of which, he says, is very ancient: "we find it very plainly alluded to in *Gen. xlix. 14*."*

Now

* In turning to the text which M. Goguet says alludes to land marks, in the edition of the bible dedicated to King James, I find the text, "Issachar is a strong ass, crouching down between two burdens." As I could perceive nothing here alluding to land marks, I at first suspected the chapter or verse wrong quoted; but having recourse to

Now if land marks be the consequence of agriculture (and land marks existed in the days of the patriarch Jacob) it follows that agriculture existed then also. But M. Goguet, had he believed or read his Bible, he might have found texts enough to convince him that agriculture was known and practised in the earliest ages. The example of Cain was surely pretty early; and although, as has before been observed, it might be said the art was lost in the deluge, yet we find frequent mention of it shortly after; Genesis xxx. 14. And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, &c.

It seems difficult to account for the opinions of European authors, in denying agriculture to the first race of men; especially when the Bible which they all pretend to believe, is so directly opposed to them. But as the Americans are always quoted to support this doctrine, it would seem that this opinion was founded upon the stupid productions, entitled Histories of America: inferences drawn from those relations, which bear every mark of prejudice and absurdity, are to be believed in preference to holy writ. Some of the Americans, say those authors, live on acorns: hence
acorns

the vulgate edition, I found the text, "Issachar shall be a strong ass lying down between two borders," which borders, I presume, M. Goguet thought alluded to land marks

acorns were the original diet of mankind : for men in early ages, knew nothing of agriculture is plain from the practice of those savages. Here is first a false statement of fact ; and then a conclusion in opposition to holy writ. M. Goguet, it is very plain, has fell into this error ; for he says, “ Travellers inform us, that even at this day, in some parts of the world, they meet with men who are strangers to all social intercourse, of a character so cruel and ferocious, that they live in perpetual war, destroying and devouring each other. Those wretched people, void of all the principles of humanity, without laws, polity or government, live in dens and caverns, and differ but very little from the brute creation ; their food consists of some roots, and fruits, with which the woods supply them ; for want of skill and industry, they can seldom procure more solid nourishment. In a word, not having the most common and obvious notions, they have nothing of humanity but the external figure. Here he quotes his authorities, *Voyage 5 le Blanc. Hist. nat. de Island. Hist. des Isles Mariannes. Lettres edifiantes. N. Relat. de la France equinox. Hist. gen. des Voyages. Voyage de Frezier. Rec. des Voyages au Nord.* Many of them, no doubt, of equal authority with Robinson Crusoe. But M. Goguet says, those savage people exactly answer the description given us by historians of the ancient state of mankind.

kind. Does Mr. Goguet believe that we are in possession of any history of the ancient primitive state of mankind, except the Bible? But M. Goguet has established his opinion, and will not flinch from it. He says, "But all the rest of mankind, except a few families of Noah's descendants, who settled in Persia, Syria and Egypt, I repeat it again, led the life of savages and barbarians." We will give up to M. Goguet's repetitions and his obstinacy, but we will think as we please; we know of no such ourang outang as he has just described from ignorant voyages. So much for M. Goguet; let us hear what is said on the other side of the question: The editors of the Encyclopedia say, "Nor is there any solid reason for concluding that all nations were originally unskilled in agriculture." See article agriculture, Encyclopedia. Modern discoveries also prove, that agriculture is every where known. For of all the rude and uncivilized inhabitants of our vast continent, of all the numerous islands in the pacific ocean;* of those under the equator,

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CAROLINE ISLES.

* Father Cantova, speaking of the Caroline Islands, says, "The principal occupation of the men, is to make boats for fishing, and to cultivate the earth."

Lettres edifiantes & curieuses. Tom. 15, P. 313.

FRIENDLY ISLES.

"The province allotted to the men, is as might be expected, far more laborious and extensive than that of the

where reigns an eternal spring : where a luxuriant soil, and a vertical sun, produce fruits in abundance, and seem most to preclude the necessity of agriculture ; it is, notwithstanding, universally known and practised. Dr. Blackstone's remarks on the origin of property, are in many instances so similar to those of President Goguet, that

women : agriculture, architecture, boat-building, fishing and other things that relate to navigation are the objects of their care ; cultivated roots and fruits being their principal support, this requires their constant attention to agriculture, which they pursue very diligently, and seem to have brought to almost as great perfection as circumstances will permit."

OTAHEITE.

In the account of the agriculture of Otaheite, Captain Cook seems in some measure to contradict himself. He says, " it is doubtless the natural fertility of the country, combined with the mildness and serenity of the climate, that renders the natives so careless in their cultivation ; that in many places, though overflowing with the richest productions, the smallest traces cannot be observed. The cloth plant, which is raised by seeds brought from the mountains, and the ava or intoxicating pepper, are almost the only things to which they pay any attention." Capt. Cook afterwards tells us that he supposes the inhabitant of Otaheite prevents the progress of the bread plant, to make room for others, to afford him some variety in his food ; the chief of which are the cocoa nut and plantain, the first of which he says can give no trouble after it has raised itself a foot or two above the ground ; but the plain-

that one would be apt to think that the Doctor did not come honestly by them; but that he pilfered them from the "Origin of Laws, Arts and sciences." "When husbandry was unknown," says the President, "all lands were common. There were no boundaries nor land marks, every one sought his subsistence where he thought fit. By turns they abandoned and repossessed the same districts, as they were more or less exhausted. But

requires more care." Hence we may enumerate four species of vegetables cultivated at Otaheite, viz. the cloth plant, the ava, the cocoa nut and the plantain. But as the cocoa nut and the plantain were the chief among other substitutes to the bread plant; here is a fair inference that some other species of vegetables were cultivated.

SANDWICH ISLES.

"What we saw of their agriculture furnished sufficient proofs that they are not novices in that art. The vale ground is one continued plantation, of taro, and a few other things, which have all the appearance of being well attended to. The potatoe fields and spots of sugar cane or plantains, on the higher grounds, are planted with the same regularity, and always in the same determinate figure, generally as a square or oblong; but neither those nor the others are enclosed with any kind of fence, unless we reckon the ditches in the low grounds such; which it is more probable are intended to convey water to the taro. The great quantity and goodness of those articles, may also perhaps be as much attributed to skilful culture, as to natural fertility of soil."

Cooke's last Voyage.

But after agriculture, this was not practicable. It was necessary then to distinguish possessions, and to take necessary measures, that every member of society might enjoy the fruits of his labors." The President here supposes, that vices which receive their existence with bad government, are natural to the heart of man. The Indians pursue agriculture, but their land is in common; and they enjoy the fruits of their labour, without any boundaries, enclosures or divisions of land. Theft is unknown among them; this is an incontrovertible fact, which totally overturns and demolishes the crazy theories of President Goguet and Doctor Blackstone.

"The art of agriculture," says the Doctor, "by regular connection and consequence, introduced the idea of more permanent property in the soil, than had been hitherto received and adopted. It was clear that the earth could not produce her fruits in sufficient quantities, without the assistance of tillage; but who would be at the pains of tilling it, if another might watch an opportunity to seize upon, and enjoy the product of his industry, art, and labour. Had not therefore, a separate property in lands, as well as movables, been vested in some individual, the world must have continued a forest, and men have been mere animals

animals of prey ; which according to some philosophers is the genuine state of nature” But we deny that by any connexion or consequence, the art of agriculture necessarily introduced more permanent property in the soil, than was known in the days of Cain, or than is now known by the American Indians. We deny that by the laws of nature any man could seize upon the product of the art, industry or labor of another ; and surely the Doctor forgets not only the Bible, but his own words, for he has already established the position, that bodily labour bestowed upon any subject which before lay in common, gives the fairest and most reasonable title to exclusive property therein. We deny that by any necessary consequence, a community of lands would have detained the world a forest. A right to exclusive possession in lands, founded on the equitable and rational principle of labor, would at all times have been sufficient for all the purposes of men. What does the Doctor mean by *mere animals of prey*? The savage, as we are pleased to call him, takes his bow and repairs to some forest, to obtain subsistence by the death of some animal : the polished citizen takes his pence, and repairs to some butcher ; the brute creation are equally victims, and men equally animals of prey. Civilized or savage, bowels entombed in bowels, is still his delight ; but the savage slays to satisfy his natural wants,

wants, the citizen often murders for purposes of riot and ostentation; and before he should upbraid the savage on this score, he should have profited by the precepts which the poet puts into the mouth of Pythagoras: "*Parcie mortales, dapibus temerare nefandis corpora' sunt fruges, sunt deducunt ramos pondere poma suo, tumidaque in vitibus uvæ, sunt herbæ dulces, sunt que mitescere flamma molliri que queant,*"* &c. Precepts which were never conveyed to the savage; but which the citizen has been in possession of for ages past.

The Doctor's premises being therefore false, his conclusions of the necessity of a separate property

* Spare, O mortals! to pollute your bodies with horrid feasts. There are fruits, there are apples, which bend the branches by their weight, and juicy grapes on the vine. There are sweet herbs, and herbs which may be made sweeter and softer by fire, &c.

Or. Met. lib. 15.

It may be indeed doubted, whether butcher's meat is any where a necessary of life. Grain and other vegetables, with the help of milk, cheese, and butter, or oil where butter is not to be had, it is known from experience, can without any butcher's meat, afford the most plentiful, the most wholesome, the most nourishing, and the most invigorating diet. Decency no where requires that any man should eat butcher's meat, as it in most places requires that he should wear a linen shirt, or a pair of leather shoes.

Smith's Wealth of Nations.

perty in lands, being vested in some individuals, falls to the ground of course. But, continues the Doctor, "Whereas now (so graciously has Providence interwoven our duty and our happiness together) the result of this very necessity, has been the enobling of the human species, by giving it opportunity of improving its rational faculties, as well as of exerting its natural; necessity begat property, and order to insure that property, recourse was had to civil society, which brought with it a train of inseparable concomitants, states governments, laws, punishments, and the public exercise of religious duties." That is to say, God created man imperfect and ignoble, a mere animal of prey; but when, with the sword of violence and the pen of sophistry, a few had plundered, or cheated the bulk of their rights, the few became ennobled, and the many were reduced from mere animals of prey to beasts of burden. But why not mention a few more concomitants of civil society, such as poverty, vices innumerable, and diseases unknown in the state of nature. Look around your cities, ye who boast of having established the civilization and happiness of man: See at every corner of your streets, some wretched object, with tattered garments, squalid look, and hopeless eye, publishing your lies, in folio to the world. Hedged in the narrow strait, between your sanguinary laws, and the

the pressing calls of hunger, he has no retreat ; but like an abortive being, created to no manner of purpose, his only wish is death. For of what use can life be, but to augment his sufferings, by a comparison of his desperate lot with your's ?

But to continue, “ The only question remaining says the Doctor, is, how this property became actually vested, or what is it that gave a man an exclusive right to retain in a permanent manner that specifick land which, before belonged generally to every body, but particularly to nobody. And as we before observed, that occupancy gave a right to the temporary use of the soil, so it is agreed upon all hands, that occupancy gave also the original right to the permanent property in the substance of the earth itself, which excludes every one else but the owner from the use of it. There is indeed, some difference among the writers of natural law, concerning the reason why occupancy should convey this right, and invest one with this absolute property. Grotius and Puffendorf, insisting that this right of occupancy is founded upon a tacit and implied assent of all mankind, that the first occupant should become the owner ; and Barbyrac, Titius, Mr. Locke and others holding that there is no such implied assent, neither is it necessary that there should be ; for that the
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very act of occupancy alone being a degree of bodily labour, is from a principle of natural justice, without any consent or compact, sufficient of itself to gain a title. A dispute that favours too much of nice and scholastic refinement! However, both sides agree in this, that occupancy is the thing by which the title was in fact originally gained. Every man seizing to his own continued use, such spots of ground as he found most agreeable to his own convenience, provided he found them unoccupied by any man." But why this snarl at Barbyrac, Titius, Mr. Locke and others? It is plain, that Dr. Blackstone had predetermined when he wrote his commentaries, to exclude the great body of mankind from any right to the bounties of Providence, light, air and water excepted; or else why would he turn up his nose at a distinction absolutely necessary to set bounds to the quantum, and prevent a monopoly of all the lands among a few? The position has been before established, "that bodily labor bestowed on any subject before common, gives the best title to exclusive property." But the act of occupancy is a degree of bodily labor; that is, the occupancy extends as far as the labor; or in other words, a man has a right to as much land as he cultivates, and no more; which is Mr. Locke's doctrine. This distinction is therefore absolutely necessary to determine the quantum

of lands any individual could possess under the laws of nature. For shall we say, a man can possess only the ground in immediate contact with his feet; or if he climbs to the top of a mountain, and exclaims, Behold, I possess as far as I can see! shall there be any magic in the words, or the expression, which shall convey the right of all that land, in fee simple, to him and his heirs forever? No: as labor constitutes the right, so it sensibly defines the boundaries of possession.* How then shall we detest the empty sophist, who in order to establish his system of monopoly, would fain persuade us that the Almighty did not know what he was about when he made man. That he made him an animal of prey, and intended him for a polished citizen; that he gave his bounties in common to all, and yet suffered a necessity to exist by which they could be enjoyed only by a few. Had Dr. Blackstone been disposed to give his readers a true account of the origin of landed property in Europe he might have said, exclusive property in lands originated with government; but most of the governments that we have any knowledge of, were founded by conquest: property therefore in its origin, seems to have been arbitrary.

* The Europeans have long supposed that the mere walking upon a piece of vacant ground, gave them a right to it. Hence the Spaniards upon their first landing on this continent, set up a post, by which they claimed a right to it.

arbitrary. He might then have expatiated upon the difficulty and inconvenience of attempting any innovations upon the established rules of property. This would have sufficiently answered his purpose, and saved him much sophistry and absurdity, and not a little impiety: for it is surely blasphemy to say, that there is a necessity of abrogating the divine law contained in the text of Genesis, to make room for human laws, which starve and degrade, one half of mankind, to pamper and intoxicate the rest.

“ But after all, continues the Doctor, there are some few things, which must still unavoidably remain in common: such (among others) are the elements of light, air and water.” Thank you for nothing, Doctor. It is very generous, indeed, to allow us the common right to the elements of light, air and water, or even the blood which flows in our veins. Blackstone’s Commentaries have been much celebrated; and this very chapter, so replete with malignant sophistry and absurdity, has been inserted in all the magazines, museums, registers, and other periodical publications in England, and cried up as the most ingenious performance ever published. Dr. Priestly, and Mr. Furneaux, both attacked Mr. Blackstone on the subject of some invectives against the dissenters, and a mal-exposition of the toleration

toleration act; but no champion was to be found to take the part of poor forlorn Human Nature, and the Doctor was suffered, unmolested, to quibble away all the rights of the great brotherhood of mankind. Reduced to light, air and water, for an inheritance, one would have thought their situation could not be easily made worse; but it is not difficult to be mistaken. The bulk of mankind were not only cheated out of their right to the soil, but were held ineligible to offices in the government, because they were not freeholders. First cruelly to wrest from them the paternal inheritance of their universal Father, and then to make this outrageous act an excuse, for denying them the rights of citizenship. This is the history of civil society in which our duty and happiness, are so admirably interwoven together. We will however never believe, that men originally entered into a compact by which they excluded themselves from all right to the bounties of Providence, and if they did, the contract could not be binding on their posterity; for although a man may give away his own right, he cannot give away the right of another. "The only true and natural foundations of society," says Dr. Blackstone, "are the wants and fears of individuals." The word *society* here is a vague term, by which we are at liberty to understand any government which has existed from the creation of the world

to the present day. But if the European governments were erected to supply the wants and lessen the fears of individuals, we may venture to assert that the first projectors of them were errant blockheads. The wants of men, instead of having been lessened, have been multiplied, and that in proportion to his boasted civilization; and the fear of poverty alone is more than sufficient to counterbalance all the fears to which he was subject, in the rudest stage of natural liberty. From this source arise almost all the disorders in the body politic. The fear of poverty has given a double spring to avarice, the deadliest passion in the human breast; it has erected a golden image, to which all mankind, with reverence, bend the knee, regardless of their idolatry. Merit is but an abortive useless gift to the possessor, unless accompanied with wealth; he might chuse which tree whereon to hang himself, did not his virtuous mind tell him to "dig, beg, rot and perish well content, so he but wrap himself in honest rags at his last gasp, and die in peace."

It is a melancholy reflection that in almost all ages and countries, men have been cruelly butchered, for crimes occasioned by the laws; and which they never would have committed, had they not been deprived of their natural means of subsistence. But the governors of mankind seem
never

never to have made any allowance for poverty ; but like the stupid physician who prescribed bleeding for every disorder, they seem ever to have been distinguished by an insatiable thirst for human blood. The altars of a merciful God, have been washed to their foundation, from the veins of miserable men ; and the double edged sword of Justice, with all its formality and parade, seems calculated to cut off equally the innocent & guilty. Between religion and law, man has had literally no rest for the sole of his foot. In the dark ages of Gothic barbarity, ignorance was some excuse for the framing of absurd systems ; but in the age in which Dr. Blackstone lived, he should have known better, he should have known that the unequal distribution of property was the parent of almost all the disorders of government ; nay, he did know it, for he had read Beccaria, who treating upon the crime of robbery, says, “ But this crime, alas ! is commonly the effect of misery and despair, the crime of that unhappy part of mankind, to whom the right of exclusive property (a terrible and perhaps unnecessary right) has left but a bare subsistence.” There is no necessity for concealing this important truth ; but much benefit may be expected from its promulgation—It offers a foundation whereon to erect a system, which like the sun in the universe, will transmit light, life and harmony to all under its influence—I mean—

A SYSTEM OF EQUAL EDUCATION.

C H A P. III.

Consequences drawn from the preceding Chapters, by which it is proved, that all Governments are bound to secure to their Subjects the Means of acquiring Knowledge in Sciences and in Arts.

IN the first part of this work, we have shown that the most obvious difference between the situation of the savage and the civilized man, is the division of property. We have shewn also, that this difference is the origin of all the miseries and vices of the one, and of all the innocence and happiness of the other. We have also demonstrated, that the civilized man has been unjustly deprived of his right to the bounties of Providence, and that he has been rendered, as much as human laws could do it, an abortive creation. We will now inquire the best mode of alleviating his miseries, without disturbing the established rules of property. In the savage state, as there is no learning, so there is no need of it. Meum & tuum, which principally receives existence with civil society, is but little known in the rude stages of natural liberty; and where
all.

all property is unknown, or rather, where all property is in common, there is no necessity of learning to acquire or defend it. If in adverting from a state of nature, to a state of civil society, men gave up their natural liberty, and their common right to property, it is but just that they should be protected in their civil liberty, and furnished with means of gaining exclusive property, in lieu of that natural liberty, and common right of property, which they had given up in exchange for the supposed advantages of civil society; otherwise the change is for the worse, and the general happiness is sacrificed for the benefit of a few. In all contracts, say civilians, there should be a *quid pro quo*. If civil society therefore deprives a man of his natural means of subsistence, it should find him other means; otherwise civil society is not a contract, but a self-robbery, a robbery of the basest kind: "It represents a madman, who tears his body with his arms, and Saturn, who cruelly devours his own children." Society should then furnish the people with means of subsistence, and those means should be an inherent quality in the nature of the government, universal, permanent and uniform, because their natural means were so. The means I allude to, are the means of acquiring knowledge; as it is by the knowledge of some art or science that man is to provide for subsistence in civil society. These means

means of acquiring knowledge, as I said before, should be an inherent quality, in the nature of the government: that is, the education of children should be provided for in the constitution of every state. By education, I mean, instruction in arts as well as sciences. Education then ought to be secured by government to every class of citizens, to every child in the state. The citizens should be instructed in sciences by public schools; and in arts, by laws enacted for that purpose; by which parents and others, having authority over children, should be compelled to bind them out, to certain trades or professions, that they may be enabled to support themselves with becoming independency, when they shall arrive to years of maturity. Education should not be left to the caprice, or negligence of parents, to chance, or confined to the children of wealthy citizens: it is a shame, a scandal to civilized society, that part only of the citizens should be sent to colleges and universities to learn to cheat the rest of their liberties. Are ye aware, legislators, that in making knowledge necessary to the subsistence of your subjects, ye are in duty bound to secure to them the means of acquiring it? Else what is the bond of society, but a rope of sand, incapable of supporting its own weight? A heterogenous jumble of contradiction and absurdity, from which the subject knows not how to extricate himself,

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but often falls a victim to his natural wants, or to cruel and inexorable laws—starves or is hanged. In the single reign of Henry VIII. we are informed by Harrison, that seventy two thousand thieves and rogues were hanged in England. How shall we account for this number of executions? Shall we suppose that the English nation at this period, were a pack of thieves, and that every one of this number richly deserved his fate? Or shall we say, that the lives of so many citizens were sacrificed to a wretched, and barbarous policy? The latter seems to be the fact. The lands in England, at this time, were held under the feudal system, in large tracts, by lords; the people were called vassals; but the conditions of their servitude were so hard, their yoke so grievous to be borne, that numbers left the service of their lords; but where could they fly? or how were they to provide for subsistence? The cultivation of the soil was denied them, except upon terms too vile and degrading to be accepted; and arts and commerce, which at this day maintain the bulk of the people, were then in their infancy, and probably employed but a small proportion of the people. We despise thieves, not caring to reflect that human nature is always the same; that when it is a man's interest to be a thief, he becomes one; but when it is his interest to support a good character, he becomes an honest man.

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That even thieves are honest among each other, because it is their interest to be so. We seldom hear of a man in independent circumstances being indicted for petit felony: the man would be an idiot indeed, who would stake a fair character for a few shillings, which he did not need;—but the greatest part of those indicted for petit felonies, are men who have no characters to lose, that is no substance, which the world always takes for good character. If a man has no fortune, and through poverty or neglect of his parents, he has had no education, and learned no trade; in such a forlorn situation, which demands our charity and our tears, the equitable and humane laws of England spurn him from their protection, under the harsh term of a vagrant or a vagabond, and he is cruelly ordered to be whipped out of the county.

From newspapers we often gather important and curious information. "In the Baltimore Advertiser, of the 16 Nov. 1790, is the following extract from an English newspaper: "The French exult, in having been the first nation who made their King confess himself a citizen. With all due deference to the French, we manage those things as well in England—In the last reign, there was a good deal of dispute between the parish of
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St. Martin, and the board of green cloth, about the payment of poor rates, for the houses in Scotland yard. The board would not pay, because they belonged to the King! "And if they do belong to the King, is not the King a parishioner?" was the reply; *but if the thing is at all doubtful, we will put it beyond dispute;*" and they accordingly elected his majesty to the office of church warden. The King served the office by deputy, and was thankful they had not made him a constable — They might have made him an overseer of the poor; which every King is, or ought to be, in right of his office; but in that case, by the old constitution of St. Martin, he might have had the flogging of vagrants to perform with his own hands; for there is in the books of the parish, a curious item of expence. "*To furnishing the Overseer of the poore with one cloke, maske and cappe, to whippe the beggars out of the parish*" So much for English parish law; a remnant of which, says a writer in the Delaware Gazette, has more than once been put in execution in this state. Strangers suspected of being poor, have been imprisoned because they could produce no pass from the place they last left. Unfortunate civilized man! Too much reason had Raynal to say, "Every where you meet with masters, and always with oppression." How often, says this venerable philosopher, have we heard the poor man expostulating

expostulating with heaven, and asking what he had done, that he should deserve to be born in an indigent and dependent station.

How can those English vagrant acts be reconciled to that law, which pretends to protect every man in his just rights? Or have poor men no rights? How will they square with the doctrines of the Christian Religion, which preach poverty, charity, meekness, and disinterestedness, after the example of their humble founder. "Let us dwell no longer" says a French writer, "upon those miseries, the detail of which will only grieve and tire you; believe that the ornaments of your churches, would better cover the nakedness of Jesus Christ, in the sacred and miserable persons of your poor: yes, you would have more merit, to cover his terrestrial members, than to entertain a pomp foreign to his laws, and the charity of his heart. The Church, the spouse of a God, poor and humble, hath always had a terrible fear of poverty: she has preserved wisely, and in good time, resources against this terrifying sin. The immense wealth she has amassed by preaching poverty, hath put her at her ease, until the consummation of ages." Is it any wonder that poverty, should be such a formidable terror to civilized nations, when it never meets with quarter,

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but always with persecution, when both religion and law declare it to be the object of their most implacable hatred and disgust. English vagrant acts, although they are a manifest abuse of civilization, have been hitherto impregnable to the attacks of sound reason, and elegant satire. Many English authors, have honestly reprobated them; Mr. Fielding in several of his novels, has highly ridiculed them; and Doctor Goldsmith has exposed them in a vein of inimitable satire, in his history of a poor soldier. Pity such Philosophers were not magistrates!

"In vain," says Raynal, "does custom, prejudice, ignorance and hard labor stupify the lower class of mankind, so as to render them insensible of their degradation; neither religion nor morality can hinder them from seeing, and feeling, the injustice of the arrangements of policy in the distribution of good and evil." But how comes this injustice in the arrangements of policy? Is it not evident that it is all the work of men's hands? Thus it is, that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. A tyrant, a madman, or a fool, forms a society; to aggrandize his own family and his dependants, he creates absurd and unnatural distinctions; to make one part of the people fools, he makes the other part slaves. His posterity

posterity in a few generations, mix with the mass of the people, and they then suffer for the despotism, the folly, or the ignorance of their ancestor. The distinctions however, which are the root of their misery, still exist, although their author is extinct; thus it is that the folly of man outlives himself, and persecutes his posterity.

“To live and to propogate,” says the before-mentioned author, “being the destination of every living species; it should seem that society, if it be one of the first principles of man, should concur in assisting this double end of nature.” We should be cautious how we unite the words Society and Government; they being essentially different. Society promotes, but bad governments check population. In bad governments only, is celibacy known: and it is of little consequence what class of subjects practise it; whether the clergy, as in France, or the servants, as in England; it is always baneful. It estranges the affections of the human heart from its proper object, and gives the passions an unnatural direction. Poverty, the great scourge of civilized nations, is the immediate cause of celibacy in the lower class of people.

Celibacy in the higher ranks proceed from the same cause, though not so immediately. The
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fear of poverty, has made the love of gain the ruling passion : hence parents to secure an estate to their children, marry them in their infancy : hence money is always title good enough, to procure a husband or wife : hence those preposterous matches, which unite beauty and deformity, youth and old age, mildness and ferocity, virtue and vice. In Europe the inclination of a girl is seldom consulted in regard to a husband : hence the infidelity to the marriage bed so common in those countries; and the matrimonial strife so frequent, which deter many from entering into that state, who have both ability and inclination.

It has been observed, that the attraction of the sexes, is in many circumstances similar to gravity, the spring of motion in the universe ; that it always acts in the same degree, in the same climate. If the design of Providence, in the creation of man was that he should multiply and replenish the earth ; why endeavour to destroy this natural propensity ? why encourage celibacy repugnant to nature, and death to society ? Men do not, in fact, practise celibacy through inclination, but necessity : in short nothing is wanting to induce men to marry, but to enable every man to maintain a wife : and should the care of government extend to the proper education of the subject, every man would be enabled to do it.

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We have already demonstrated, that government should furnish the subject, with some substitute, in lieu of his natural means of subsistence, which he gave up to government when he submitted to exclusive property in lands. An education is also necessary, in order that the subject may know the obligations he is under to government.

The following observations of a celebrated English historian, are very applicable :—"Every law, says Mrs. Macaulay, in her history of England, relating to public or private property, and in particular, penal statutes, ought to be rendered so clear and plain, and promulgated in such a manner to the public, as to give a full information of its nature and extent to every citizen. Ignorance of laws, if not wilful, is a just excuse for their transgression; and if the care of government does not extend to the proper education of the subject, and to their proper information on the nature of moral turpitude, and legal crimes, and to the encouragement of virtue, with what face of justice can they punish delinquency? But if on the contrary, the citizens, by the oppression of heavy taxes, are rendered incapable, by the utmost exertion of honest industry, of bringing up, or providing for a numerous family; if every encouragement is given to licentiousness, for
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the purpose of amusing and debasing the minds of the people, or for raising a revenue on the vices of the subject; is punishment in this case better than legal murder? or to use a strong, yet adequate expression, is it better than infernal tyranny?"

Time was when the laws were written in a language which the people did not understand, and it seemed the policy of government, that the people should not understand them; contrary to every principle of sound policy in legislation. If the system of English law was simplified, and reduced to the standard of the common sense of the people, or were the understandings of the people cultivated, so as to comprehend the system, many absurdities which exist at this day, would have been rejected. We are told by Sir William Blackstone, that it is a settled rule at common law, that no counsel shall be allowed a prisoner upon his trial upon the general issue, in any capital crime, unless some point of law shall arise proper to be debated. This is without doubt a barbarous law, and it is a little surprising, that while every other art and science is daily improving, such inconsistencies should have been suffered to continue to this time of day, in a science on which our lives depend. Men are every day liable to suffer in their property, by their ignorance

norance of the forms of legal writings adopted by lawyers. But although a man should be under the necessity of suffering in his property, by not knowing which form of writing would best secure his debts, or preserve his estate; yet certainly he might be allowed to know some little of the statute law, in which his life is concerned. Those governments, therefore, which think the instruction of youth worthy their attention, would do well to cause an abridgement of their statute law to be read in their schools at stated times, as often as convenient.

Mankind ever inclined to the marvellous, run astray in search of a phantom, an ignis fatuus, while they neglect those simple and palpable truths, which could only conduct them to that happiness, they are so eagerly in search of. How many volumes have been wrote upon predetermination, free will, liberty and necessity; topics which are not properly the objects of the human understanding, and of which after we have wrote a thousand volumes, we are not a whit wiser than when we began: while the economy of society is but little understood, and the first and simplest principles of legislation entirely neglected. Nothing is more obvious than that every person in a civilized society, should contribute towards the support of government. How stupid then is the
economy

economy of that society conducted, which keeps one half of the citizens in a state of abject poverty, saddling the other half with the whole weight of government, and the maintenance of all the poor beside? Every citizen ought to contribute, to the support of government, but all obligations should bind within the limits of possibility; a man, at least, should be able to pay a tax, before he is compelled to do it as a duty. But the pauper, who cannot procure even the vilest food to spin out a miserable existence, may indeed burthen, but can never support the government. The English, whose absurdities we are at all times proud to imitate, in this respect seem justly to have deserved the keen satire of Dr. Swift, who says, the sage professors of Laputa were employed in extracting sun beams out of cucumbers, calcining ice into gun powder, and making fire malleable. The policy of the English government appears to have been to make the mass of people poor, and then to persecute them for their poverty, as their vagrant acts abundantly testify; those acts, as has been said before, are a manifest abuse of civilization—they are impolitic, barbarous, inhuman and unjust, and would disgrace even a society of satyrs.

In an essay on trade, written in the reign of George II. are the following paragraphs:—

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“ The Spectator calculates 7 parts in 8 of the people, to be without property, & get their bread by daily labor. If so, will trade pretend to employ all hands equally and constantly? If not, it will be worth considering how they live in the present situation of things. Mr. Gee, a very intelligent author, computes three millions unemployed in the three kingdoms: the truth of which appears by divers particulars. Prisons, work-houses, transports, and beggars are so many instances to confirm the truth of this observation. Some preposterously complain, that in any labor or business that requires expedition, a sufficiency of hands is wanting. But what numbers are there continually travelling from one country to another, from nation to nation, who would work day and night for a little more pay; which argues that the choice is to live by honest means, and if they are hurried into others less justifiable, it is for want of employment: and as such men must eat and drink whether they work or no, they are put to many shifts for a subsistence; no wonder then if the empty stomach fills the head with dangerous projects. It is unnatural to think that many of those poor wretches who are doomed to death or exile, would have run the hazard of their lives, or liberty, in such trifles as it is frequently forfeited for (the 10d. or 12d. convicts) were they not compelled to it by griping necessity;
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for it is well known, that many of those who are sent abroad, alter their sentiments with their circumstances, and this is a principal argument to recommend the christianity of transportation."

"Rapin, in his history of Edward VI. thus speaks of the people's complaints—for they were so early, that they were not able to gain their livelihoods—1st because business was fallen into more hands, meaning the vagabond monks.—2d. by inclosures—3d. by breeding sheep, which took fewer hands, and lessened the wages. Dean Swift gives much the same reasons for the miserable poverty of Ireland. — Philips, Esq. argues thus—If, says he, there were full employment, labor would rise to its just value, as every thing else does when the demand is equal to the quantity; and therefore denies that there is work enough, or that property is reasonably and sufficiently diffused, till necessaries are rendered so plentiful, and thereby so cheap, that the wages of the laboring man will purchase a comfortable support. Vanderlint's late pamphlet adjusts every article of expence, and at the lowest computation supposes a laborer cannot support himself, a wife and four children at less than £.50 a year. Now if he works daily as a labourer, the top wages he can get, exceeds not 18d. a day. Masons, carpenters, &c. have half-a-crown; but both fall
short

short of the sum, though in full employ ; so that beggary and thievery, from this account, seem their inevitable destiny ; and while one part of the world condemns and punishes the delinquents, the other ought to rejoice ; for the greater the numbers that go into idle and unwarrantable ways of living, the better and securer state it makes for those behind. Dr. Garth has ingeniously described the use of such contingencies in higher life :

*For sickly seasons the physicians wait,
And politicians thrive in brails of state ;
In sessions the poor lay all their stress,
And hope each month their crouds will be the less.*

Poverty makes mankind unnatural in their affections and behaviour. The child secretly wishes the death of the parent, and the parent thinks his children an incumbrance, and has sometimes robbed their bellies to fill his own. Many yield themselves up to the unnatural lusts of others, for a trifling gratuity ; and the most scandalous practices are often the effects of necessitous poverty. Is it not therefore of consequence to provide for the growing evil ? and worthy a legislative enquiry how the poor people are brought up ? Men else come to renounce their generative faculty, or destroy that fruit whose misery they cannot

not prevent. The difficulty of getting money to purchase food is the same thing now which dearths were formerly, with this little difference, that as famine might vex them once in an age or two, this sticks close every year for the life time of laborers, who are at low wages, and at an uncertainty even in that; numbers of them being driven to great straits, sitting in the market place till the eleventh hour, and then called perhaps a servant to the plantations; some through a meekness of disposition, starve quietly and in private. Others associate in crimes, and are hanged, or in fear of that, hang themselves. It is in vain to argue against fact; no nation on earth, nor perhaps all the absolute kingdoms together, affording so many instances of suicides and executions as England, and plainly for a care in most of them about this mortal body how it shall subsist."

But if such has been the situation of the poor, in the nation whose government has been so much boasted of, how have they fared in the rest of Europe? Take the following description of the galley slaves of Italy, from the *Sieur Dupaty*. "All sorts of wretches are fastened indiscriminately to the same chain; malefactors, smugglers, dealers, Turks taken by the corsairs, and volunteers, gally slaves. Voluntary galley slaves! Yes—These are poor men, whom government get hold

hold of between hunger and death. It is in this narrow passage they wait and watch for them. Those wretched beings, dazzled with a little money, do not perceive the gallies, and are enlisted. Poverty and guilt are bound in the same chain! The citizen who serves the republic, suffers the same punishment with him who betrays it! The Genoese carry their barbarity still further; when the term of their enlisting is near expiring, they propose to lend a little money to those miserable creatures. Unhappy men are eager for enjoyment; the present moment alone exists for them; they accept—but at a week's end, nothing remains to them but slavery and regret; insomuch that at the expiration of that time, they are compelled to enlist again, to discharge their debt, and sell eight years more of their existence. Thus do the greatest part of them consume, from enlistments to loans, and from loans to enlistments, their whole lives at the gallies in the last degree of wretchedness and infamy : there they expire. Let us add one more trait to this picture of the gallies. I saw the wretches selling from bench to bench; coveting, disputing, stealing even the fragments of ailment which the dogs of the street had refused—Genoa ! thy palaces are not sufficiently lofty, spacious, numerous, nor brilliant, we still perceive thy gallies !

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We may apostrophise more generally. Civilization, thy benefits are not sufficiently solid, numerous nor splendid; we every where perceive, that degradation and distress, which thy daughter poverty has entailed upon our race.

Finally, the security of all governments must in a great measure depend upon the people. Should a savage be introduced into a civilized society, and denied all means of improving himself, could it be expected that he could form any accurate notions of the policy, economy or obligations of that society? And yet among the great body of the people in polished Europe, among the laboring poor, how rare is it to find a man possessed of any thing equal to the general knowledge of an ingenious savage? The European artist is expert in the particular article of his trade or art. Thus a pin-maker is dextrous at making pins; but in every thing else he is as grossly stupid; his understanding is as benumbed and torpid as it is possible for any intellectual faculty to be. The number of executions in England, has been already observed to be occasioned more by the wretched policy of the government, than by any innate depravity of the people; who, generally speaking, are ignorant to a proverb. They have, it is true, universities and colleges

colleges, with a few charity schools; but the former receive none but the sons of wealthy subjects, and the latter are very circumscribed; few poor children have even the chance of balloting for admittance. Hence the body of the people are ignorant. And in France, if one hundredth part of the money expended in the maintenance of legions, fat, lazy, lubberly ecclesiasticks, had been employed in instructing the people in public schools, the nation would be a nation of men, instead of a rude and ignorant rabble, utterly incapable of profiting by the golden opportunity which now offers; and which, were it not for the exertions of their leaders, would, instead of emancipating them, only serve more strongly to rivet their fetters. Humanity is wounded by the outrages of the mob in France; but what better can be expected from *ignorance*, the natural parent of all enormity?

The actions of mobs are always characteristic of the people who compose them; and we will find the most ignorant always guilty of the greatest outrages: hence the striking difference between American and European mobs: The mob that burnt the tea at Boston, and even that under Shays, was a regular and orderly body, when compared with that of Lord George Gordon, or any of the late mobs in France. We know of
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no such outrages committed in America. But as there will be sometimes disorders in the very best of governments; such as keep the mass of people in profound ignorance, must abide by the consequences, when the body politic is convulsed. Mr. Noah Webster is the only American author, indeed the only author of any nation, if we except perhaps Montesquieu, who has taken up the subject of education, upon that liberal and equitable scale which it justly deserves. I had the present work in idea, some time before Mr. Webster's essays made their appearance; and was not a little pleased to think he had anticipated my idea.

Although I am sensible that I have dealt pretty freely with quotations in this work already, yet I think it a debt due to Mr. Webster to introduce part of his sentiments on this subject—"A good system of education," says this author, "should be the first article in the code of political regulations; for it is much easier to introduce and establish an effectual system for preserving morals, than to correct by penal statutes, the ill effects of a bad system. I am so fully persuaded of this, that I shall almost adore that great man, who shall change our practice and opinions, and make it respectable for the first and best men to superintend the education of youth."

“It is observed by the great Montesquieu, that the laws of education ought to be relative to the principles of government. In despotic governments the people should have little or no education, except what tends to inspire them with a fervile fear. Information is fatal to despotism—In monarchies education should be partial, and adapted to each class of citizens. But “in a republican government,” says the same writer, “the whole power of education is required.” Here every class of people should know and love the laws. This knowledge should be diffused by means of schools and newspapers; that an attachment to the laws may be formed by early impressions on the mind—Two regulations are essential to the continuance of republican governments! *First*. Such a distribution of lands, and principles of descent and alienation, as shall give every citizen a power of acquiring what his industry merits. *Secondly*. Such a system of education, as gives every citizen an opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and fitting himself for places of trust. These are fundamental articles, the *sine qua non* of the existence of the American republics.

“Hence the absurdity of our copying the manners and adopting the institutions of monarchies. In several states we find laws passed, establishing provisions

provisions for colleges and academies, where people of property may educate their sons ; but no provision is made for instructing the poorer rank of people, even in reading and writing. Yet in these same states, every citizen who is worth a few shillings annually, is entitled to vote for legislators. This appears to me a most glaring solecism in government. The constitutions are republican, and the laws of education are monarchical. The former extend civil rights to every honest industrious man ; the latter deprives a large proportion of citizens, of a most valuable privilege. In our American republics, where government is in the hands of the people, knowledge should be universally diffused by means of public schools. Of such consequence is it to society, that the people who make laws, should be well informed, that I conceive no legislature can be justified in neglecting proper establishments for this purpose. Such a general system of education, is neither impracticable nor difficult : and excepting the formation of a federal government, that shall be efficient and permanent, it demands the first attention of American Patriots. Until such a system shall be adopted and pursued ; until the statesman and divine shall unite their efforts in forming the human mind, rather than in lopping its excrescences, after it has been neglected ; until legislators discover that the only way

way to make good citizens and subjects, is to nourish them from infancy ; and until parents shall be convinced, that the *worst* of men are not proper teachers to make the *best* ; mankind cannot know to what degree of perfection society and government may be carried. America affords the fairest opportunities, for making the experiments, and opens the most encouraging prospect of success."

Suffer me then Americans, to arrest, to command your attention to this important subject. To make mankind better, is a duty which every man owes to his posterity, to his country, and to his God ; and remember, my friends, there is but one way to effect this important purpose—which is—by incorporating education with government——*This is the rock on which you must build your political salvation !*



CHAP. IV.

The System of Education should be equal. Equality of Men considered. Raynal mistaken in his Notions of Equality.

THAT the system of education should be equal, is evident since the rights given up in the state of nature, and for which, education is the substitute, were equal. But as I know it will be objected by some, that the natural inequality of the human intellect, will obviate any attempt to diffuse knowledge equally, it seems necessary to make some enquiry concerning the natural equality of men. That all men are by nature equal, was once the fashionable phrase of the times ; and men gloried in this equality, and really believed it, or else they acted their parts to the life ! Latterly, however, this notion is laughed out of countenance ; and some very grave personages have not scrupled to assert, that as we have copied the English in our form of federal government, we ought to imitate them in the establishment

establishment of a nobility also. For my part, I do believe, that if there was any necessity for two distinct hereditary orders of men in a society, that men would have been created subordinate to such necessity, and would at their birth be possessed of certain characteristic marks, by which each class would be distinguished. However, as much has been said of late upon grades and gradations in the human species, I will endeavor to add my mite to the public stock. In the dark ages of the world, it was necessary that the people should believe their rulers to be a superior race of beings to themselves, in order that they should obey the absurd laws of their tyrants, without, "scrutinizing too nicely into the reasons of making them." As neither the governors nor governed understood any other principle of legislation than that of fear, it was necessary, in order that the people should fear their rulers, to believe them of a superior race to themselves. Hence in the Jewish theocracy, their rulers came in under a *jure divino* title, consecrated and anointed by the Deity himself. Hence the Mexican emperors were descended in a direct line from the sun, and in order to conduct the farce completely, the descendants of the female line only inherited, in order that the blood line of the sun might never be lost. This was a master stroke of policy, perhaps never equalled in the eastern

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world; but it sufficiently shows that the emperors were apprehensive, that if the people suspected an extinction of the blood line, that they would conclude, they were governed by men like themselves, which would be subversive of the principle of fear, on which their government was erected. But until the light of letters be again extinct, vain will be the attempt to erect a government on the single principle of fear, or to introduce a nobility in America. If the Americans could be brought seriously to believe, that by giving a few hereditary titles to some of their people, such people would immediately upon their being invested with such titles, become metamorphosed into a superior race of beings, an attempt for a nobility might succeed.

But to return to our inquiry—If an elegant silver vase, and some ore of the same metal, were shown to a person ignorant of metals, it would not require much argument to convince him that the vase could never be produced from the ore. Such is the mode of reasoning upon the inequality of the human species. Effects purely artificial, have been ascribed to nature; and the man of letters, who from his cradle to his grave, has trod the paths of art, is compared with the untutored Indian, and the wretched African, in whom slavery has deadened all the springs of the soul.

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And the result of this impartial and charitable investigation is, that there is an evident gradation in the intellectual faculties of the human species. There are various grades in the human mind, is the fashionable phrase of the times—Scarce a superficial blockhead is to be met with, but stuns you with a string of trite common place observations upon gradation; and no doubt thinks himself *in primo gradu*, or at the top of the ladder. Nature is always various in different species, and except in cases of *lufus naturæ*, always uniform in the same species. In all animals, from the most trifling insect, to the whale and elephant, there is an evident uniformity and equality through every species. Where this equality is not to be found in the human species, it is to be attributed either to climate, habit or education, or perhaps to all. It must be obvious to every intelligent person, the effect which habit alone has upon men. Aukward boobies have been taken from the plough-tail, into the continental army, in the late war, and after a few campaigns, have returned home, to the surprise and admiration of their acquaintances, elegant, ornamental and dignified characters. Such astonishing metamorphoses have been produced by the army, that to habit alone, may be ascribed all the inequality to be found in the human species.

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If then education alone (for in this sense, the army may be properly called a school) is capable of producing such astonishing effects, what may not be ascribed to it when united with climate? Indeed we have numberless common place observations which have been always read as true, and which are entirely founded upon this idea of equality in the intellectual faculties of the human race—Take the following—The minds of children are like blank paper, upon which you may write any characters you please. But what tends most to establish this idea of natural equality, we find it always uniform in the savage state. Now if there was a natural inequality in the human mind, would it not be as conspicuous in the savage as in the civilized state? The contrary of which is evident to every observer, acquainted with the American Indians. Among those people, all the gifts of Providence are in common. We do not see, as in civilized nations, part of the citizens sent to colleges, to learn to cheat the rest of their liberties; who are condemned to be hewers of wood, and drawers of water. The mode of acquiring information, which is common to one, is common to all; hence we find a striking equality in form, size and intellectual faculties, no where to be found in civilized nations. It is only in civilized nations, where extremes are to be found in the human species—it is here where wealthy and dignified mortals
roll

roll along the streets in all the parade and trappings of royalty ; while the lower class are not half so well fed as the horses of the former. It is this cruel inequality which has given rise to the epithets of nobility, vulgar, mob, canaille, &c. and the degrading, but common observation—Man differs more from man, than man from beast—The difference is purely artificial. Thus do men create an artificial inequality among themselves, and then cry out it is all natural.

If we would give ourselves time to consider, we would find an idea of natural intellectual equality every where predominant, but more particularly in free countries. The trial by jury is a strong proof of this idea in that nation; otherwise would they have suffered the unlettered peasant to decide against lawyers and judges? Is it not here taken for granted, that the generality of men although they are ignorant of the phrases and technical terms of the law, have, notwithstanding sufficient mother wit to distinguish between right and wrong? which is all the lawyer with his long string of cases and reports is able to do. From whence also arises our notion of common sense? Is it not from an idea, that the bulk of mankind, possess what is called common understanding. This common understanding must be supposed equal; or why should we apply the term common which implies equality? But it will perhaps be objected

objected, that the minds of some men are capable of greater improvement than others which daily experience testifies : to which I answer, that there is perhaps as great a variety in the texture of the human mind, as in the countenances of men. If this be admitted, the absurdity of judging of the genius of boys, by the advances they make in any particular science, will be evident. But a variety is by no means inconsistent, with an equality in the human intellect. And although there are instances of men, who by mere dint of unassisted genius, have arose to excellence; while others have been so deficient in mental powers, as not to be capable of improvement from the combined efforts of art; yet when we enumerate all the ideots and sublime geniuses in the world, they will be found too few in number when compared with the rest of mankind, to invalidate the general rule, that all men are by nature equal.

But why should a strict mathematical equality be thought necessary among men, when no such thing is to be found in nature. In the vegetable creation, the generality of plants arrive to perfection; some reach only half way, and some are blights: yet the vegetable creation is perfect. The soil is to plants what government is to man. Different soils will produce the same species of vegetables in different degrees of perfection ;
but

but there will be an equality in the perfection of vegetables produced by the same soil, in the same degree of cultivation. Thus governments which afford equal rights to the subjects, will produce men naturally equal ; that is, there will be the same equality in such men, as is to be found in all the productions of nature. As one soil, by manuring it in patches, will produce vegetables in different degrees of perfection ; so governments, which afford different privileges to different classes of people, will produce men as effectually unequal, as if the original germ or stamina of production was essentially different. The notion of a natural inequality among men, has been so generally adopted, that it has created numerous obstacles to the investigation of their rights, and biassed the most discerning of modern writers. The Abbe Raynal, whose philanthropy I revere, and of whose works I am far from being a willing critic, seems to have adopted this erroneous opinion. " It has been said," says the Abbe, in his *Revolution of America*, " that we are all born equal ; that is not so—that we had all the same rights ; I am ignorant of what are rights, where there is an inequality of talents, of strength, and no security or sanction—that nature offered to us all the same dwelling, and the same resources ; that is not so—that we were all endowed indiscriminately with the same means of defence ;
that

that is not so ; and I know not in what sense it can be true, that we all enjoy the same qualities of mind and body. There is amongst men an original inequality, for which there is no remedy. It must last forever, and all that can be obtained by the best legislation, is not to destroy it, but to prevent the abuse of it. But in making distinctions among her children, like a step-mother, in creating some children strong, and others weak, has not nature herself formed the germ or principal of tyranny ? I do not think it can be denied, especially if we look back to a time anterior to all legislation ; a time in which man will be seen as passionate, and as void of reason as a brute."

But how is it that we are not all born equal ?— There may be a difference between the child of a nobleman, and that of a peasant ; but will there not also be an inequality between the produce of seeds collected from the same plant, and sown in different soils ? Yes ; but the inequality is artificial, not natural. It has been already observed, that there is a striking equality in form, size and intellectual faculties among the American Indians, no where to be found in what we call civilized nations. Men are equal where they enjoy equal rights. Even a mathematical equality in powers among men would not necessarily secure their rights.

rights. It had escaped the Abbe's reflection, that nature, when she formed more men than two, formed the germ or principle of tyranny as effectually, as when she created one man of double powers to another ; for among three men of equal powers, two could as effectually overpower the third, as one man of six feet, could overcome one of three. But although a mathematical equality among men, neither exists, nor is necessary, yet the generality of men educated under equal circumstances, possess equal powers. This is the equality to be found in all the productions of nature the equality and the only equality necessary to the happiness of man.

The inhabitants of the United States are more upon an equality in stature, and powers of body and mind, than the subjects of any government in Europe. And of the United States, the states of New-England, whose governments by charter verged nearest to democracies, enjoy the most perfect equality. Those who live ashore, are all legislators and politicians ;* and those who follow the sea, are all captains and owners ; yet their governments are orderly, and their ships navigated with as much success, as if they were commanded with all the etiquette & subordination of royal navies. But though the constitution of the New-England states were democratical ; yet their laws

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were

* See Morse's Geography.

were chiefly borrowed from the British code, many of which were unequal ; such as vagrant acts, acts which confer rights of residence and citizenship, and the like—hence the equality of the citizens of New-England, though striking, when compared with any of the European governments, is not strictly natural. But among the American Indians, where no vestige of European absurdity is found interwoven in their laws, where they are governed by the plain and equitable code of nature, here is perfect natural equality.

The Abbe Raynal seems to be mistaken in his opinion concerning the origin of government. Speaking of the miseries to which man is subject in his civilized state, he says, "In this point of view, man appears more miserable, and more wicked than a beast. Different species of beasts subsist on different species ; but societies of men have never ceased to attack each other. Even in the same society, there is no condition but devours and is devoured, whatever may have been, or are the forms of government, or artificial equality which have been opposed to the primitive and natural inequality." Men educated under bad governments, who see nothing but vice and infamy around them; who behold hardened wretches falling victims to the laws daily, are apt to conclude that man is naturally wicked—that in a state of
nature

nature, he is a stranger to morality; he is barbarous and savage; the weak always falling a prey to the strong—that government was instituted to protect the weak, and to restrain the bold, and to bring them more upon an equality. But this is all a mistake—the man of America is a living proof to the contrary. He is innocent and spotless, when compared with the inhabitants of civilized nations. He has not yet learned the art to cheat, although the traders have imposed upon him by every base and dirty fraud, which civilized ingenuity could invent; selling him guns, which are more likely to kill the person who fires them, than the object at which they are presented; and hatchets without a particle of steel—incapable of bearing an edge, or answering any use. I have seen whole invoices of goods, to a very considerable amount, imported for the Indian trade, in which there was not an article, which was not a palpable cheat.

Some excuse indeed seems necessary, to those who have brought men under the yoke of cruel and arbitrary governments; and nothing is more easy than to say, it is all their own faults; that is the faults of the people. They had given themselves up to the full possession of their unruly passions, appetites, and desires, every man tyrannizing over his neighbour. Government, therefore,

arose

arose out of necessity. This they will assert with as much confidence, and maintain with as much obstinacy, as if forsooth, they had been personally present at the first conventions of men in a state of nature. And although no vestige is to be found of the foundation of any of the governments now existing, being laid in any such convention; and although the conduct of individuals in those societies which approach nearest to the state of nature, are so very far from supporting this opinion, that they rather teach us to believe, that men excel in wickedness in proportion to their civilization. Therefore, instead of supposing, with Abbe Raynal, a primitive inequality which was found necessary to be lessened by the artificial equality opposed to it in different forms of government; we will suppose a primitive equality, and this equality to be disturbed and broken by an external force, not by members of the same society opposed to each other, but by the conquest of one society by another; when the conquering society became the governors, and the conquered society the governed. This is clearly the case, in regard to the English government, which we know was founded by conquest; and which Mr. Blackstone, with much eloquence, but more sophistry, would fain persuade us, had a much more equitable origin. The English indeed, seem in their theory of the

the gradation of the human species, to have forgotten the state of their ancestors, when conquered by the Romans—a rude and barbarous people, dwelling in caverns, feeding on roots ; their only cloathing, the uncouth representation of the sun, moon, and stars, daubed in barbarous characters on their skins ; yet the descendents of these wretched savages pretend that there is an evident gradation in the intellectual faculties of the human species. Since therefore men are naturally equal, it follows, that the mode of education should be equal also. It is generally observed, that most of the American legislatures are composed of lawyers and merchants. What is the reason ? Because the farmer has no opportunity of getting his son instructed, without sending him to a college ; the expence of which, is more than the profits of his farm. An equal representation is absolutely necessary to the preservation of liberty. But there can never be an equal representation, until there is an equal mode of education for all citizens. For although a rich farmer may, by the credit of his possessions, help himself into the legislature ; yet if through a deficiency in his education, he is unable to speak with propriety, he may see the dearest interest of his country basely bartered away, and be unable to make any effort, except his single vote against it. Education therefore to be generally useful, should be brought home to every man's door.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

Wretched State of the Country Schools, throughout the United States ; and the absolute Necessity of a Reformation.

TH E country schools, through most of the United States, whether we consider the buildings, the teachers, or the regulations, are in every respect completely despicable, wretched and contemptible. The buildings are in general forry hovels, neither wind tight nor water tight ; a few stools serving in the double capacity of bench and desk, and the old leaves of copy books making a miserable substitute for glass windows. The teachers are generally foreigners, shamefully deficient in every qualification necessary to convey instruction to youth, and not seldom addicted to gross vices. Absolute in his own opinion, and proud of introducing what he calls his European method, one calls the first letter of the alphabet *aw*. The school is modified upon this plan, and the children who are advanced, are beat and cuffed to forget the former mode they have been taught, which irritates their minds, and retards their progress. The quarter being finished, the children lie idle until another master offers, few remaining in one place more than a quarter.

ter. When the next schoolmaster is introduced, he calls the first letter *a*, as in *mat*—the school undergoes another reform, and is equally vexed and retarded. At his removal, a third is introduced, who calls the first letter *bay*. All these blockheads are equally absolute in their own notions, and will by no means suffer the children to pronounce the letter as they were first taught, but every three months the school goes through a reform—error succeeds error—and dunce the second reigns like dunce the first.

The general ignorance of Schoolmasters has long been the subject of complaint in England, as well as America. Dr. Goldsmith says, “It is hardly possible to conceive the ignorance of many of those who take upon them the important trust of education. Is a man unfit for any profession, he finds his last resource in commencing school-master—Do any become bankrupts, they set up a boarding school, and drive a trade this way, when all others fail—nay, I have been told of butchers and barbers, who have turned schoolmasters; and more surprising still, made fortunes in their new profession.” And I will venture to pronounce that however seaport towns, from local circumstances, may have good schools, the country schools will remain in their present state of despicable wretchedness, unless incorporated with government.

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*Now, blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?
 The children crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd,
 Thro' want of care, or her whose winking eye
 And slumb'ring oscitancy marring the brood!
 The nurse, no doubt, regardless of her charge,
 She needs herself correction—needs to learn
 That it is dangerous sporting with the world—
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
 The nurture of her youth—her dearest pledge!*

If education is necessary for one man, my religion tells me it is equally necessary for another; and I know no reason why the country should not have as good schools as the sea port towns, unless indeed the policy of this country is always to be directed, as it has been, by merchants. I am no enemy to any class of men; but he that runs may read. A blind adherence to British policy seems to have pervaded both the general and state governments, notwithstanding there is no analogy between the two countries; and this will be the case, until we can raise men in the country who will think for themselves, and be able to arrange and communicate their ideas. Towns have the advantages of libraries, the country of retirement—the youth of the former, may become elegant imitators; those of the latter, bold originals; being out of the sphere of vice, so attractive in cities—their productions, will bear the stamp of virtuous energy.

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When I say that the policy of this country, has been hitherto directed by merchants, &c. I mean, that the inhabitants of sea-port towns, have a very considerable influence in all our public proceedings : and that from education and local circumstances, such inhabitants appear to me, to have an improper bias, in favor of commercial and mercantile habits and interests ; habits and interests which do not appear to me, to be congenial with the true interest of the United States.

The necessity of a reformation in the country schools, is too obvious to be insisted on ; and the first step to such reformation, will be, by turning private schools into public ones. The schools should be public, for several reasons—1st. Because, as has been before said, every citizen has an equal right to subsistence, and ought to have an equal opportunity of acquiring knowledge. 2d. Because public schools are easiest maintained, as the burthen falls upon all the citizens. The man who is too squeamish or lazy to get married, contributes to the support of public schools, as well as the man who is burthened with a large family. But private schools are supported only by heads of families, & by those only while they are interested ; for as soon as the children are grown up, their support is withdrawn ; which makes the employment so precarious, that men of ability and merit will

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not submit to the trifling salaries allowed in most country schools, and which, by their partial support, cannot afford a better.

Let public schools then be established in every county of the United States, at least as many as are necessary for the present population; and let those schools be supported by a general tax. Let the objects of those schools be to teach the rudiments of the English language, writing, book-keeping, mathematics, natural history, mechanics and husbandry—and let every scholar be admitted gratis, and kept in a state of subordination, without respect to persons. The other branch of education, I mean, instruction in arts, ought also to be secured to every individual, by laws enacted for that purpose, by which, parents and others having authority over youth, should be compelled to bind them out at certain ages, and for a limited time to persons professing mechanical or other branches, and the treatment of apprentices during their apprenticeship, should be regulated by laws expressly provided, without having recourse to the common or statute law of England. I mention this, because, independent of the difference of circumstances, between these United States and England, I think a more humane and liberal policy might be established, than that now
in

n usage in England, and better adapted to the present circumstances of America; and indeed it is high time to check that blind adherence to trans-atlantic policy, which has so generally prevailed. It would be superfluous to insist on the necessity of trades—their use is obvious. I shall only remark, that considering the transitory nature of all human advantages, how soon a man may be dispossessed of a very considerable property—how many avenues there are to misfortunes; a good trade seems to be the only sheet anchor on which we may firmly rely for safety, in the general storms of human adversity. How much then is it to be lamented, that ever the tyranny of fashion, or pride of birth, gave an idea of disgrace to those virtuous and useful occupations.

To demonstrate the practicability of establishing public schools, throughout the United States, let us suppose the states to be divided into districts according to the population, and let every district support one school, by a tax on the acre, on all lands within the district. Let us suppose, for argument's sake, six miles square, which will be 36 square miles—sufficient for a district for the mean population of the United States. The school-house should be built of brick, and in the centre of the district; it would be then three miles from the school-house door to the boundary of

of the district. The building might be two stories, with a large hall on the lower floor, for the school room; the rest of the house should be for the master's family, and might consist of two rooms on the lower floor, and three or four in the second story, with perhaps an acre of ground adjoining. We will suppose the ground to cost £.10, the building £.800, the master's salary £.150 per annum, and £.50 for an assistant, with £.50 for mathematical instruments; in all £.1060, of which £.800 is for building the school-house; and as people enough will be willing to contract for building the house, to wait a year for half the money, we will suppose £.400 to be paid the first year. Now in 36 square miles, are 23040 acres, which is little better than 4d. per acre; the next year's payment will be £.560, which will be about 7d. then the succeeding years, there will be the teacher's salary, £.150, the assistant £.50, & £.50 for contingent expences, books, &c. will be £.250. per annum, which will not amount to 3d. per acre. Now when we consider that such a trifling tax, by being applied to this best of purposes, may be productive of consequences amazingly glorious, can any man make a serious objection against public schools? "It is unjust," says one, "that I should pay for the schooling of other people's children." But, my good sir, it is more unjust, that your posterity should go without

without any education at all. And public schools is the only method I know of, to secure an education to your posterity forever. Besides, I will suppose you to be the father of four children—Now, sir, how can you educate these four children so cheap, even in your present paltry method? The common rate at present, is 8s. 4d. per quarter, which is 33s. 4d. per year, which for 4 children is £.6 13 4. Now if you hold 300 acres of land, you will pay towards the support of decent public schools, at 3d. per acre, good, or £.3 15 per annum.

Perhaps no plan of private education can ever be so cheap as public. In the instances of public schools, a considerable part of the master's salary would be spent in the district. The farmer might supply him with provisions, and the receipts might be tendered as a part of his tax to the collector. Thus the farmer would scarcely feel the tax.

No modes of faith, systems of manners, or foreign or dead languages, should be taught in those schools. As none of them are necessary to obtain a knowledge of the obligations of society, the government is not bound to instruct the citizens in any thing of the kind.—No medals or premiums of any kind should be given, under the

mistaken

mistaken notion of exciting emulation. Like titles of nobility, they are not productive of a single good effect, but of many very bad ones : my objections are founded on reason and experience. In republican governments, the praises of good men, and not medals, should be esteemed the proper reward of merit : but by substituting a bauble instead of such rational applause, do we not teach youth to make a false estimate of things, and to value them for their glitter, parade, and finery? This single objection ought to banish medals from schools for ever. I once knew a school-master, who besides being an arithmetician was a man of observation ; this person had a school of upwards of 90 scholars, and at every quarterly examination, a gold medal was given to the best writer, and a silver one to the best cypherer. I requested him one day, candidly to inform me of the effects produced by those medals ; he ingenuously told me, that they had produced but one good effect, which was, they had drawn a few more scholars to his school, than he otherwise would have had ; but that they had produced many bad effects. When the first medal was offered, it produced rather a general contention, than an emulation ; and diffused a spirit of envy, jealousy and discord ; through the whole school ; boys who were bosom friends before, became fierce contentious rivals, and when the prize was adjudged

adjudged, became implacable enemies. Those who were advanced, decried the weaker performances; each wished his opponent's abilities less than his own, and they used all their little arts to misrepresent and abuse each other's performances. And of the girls side, where perhaps a more modest and more amiable train, never graced a school, harmony and love, which hitherto presided, were banished, and discord reigned triumphant—jealousy and envy, under the specious semblance of emulation, put to flight all the tender, modest, amiable virtues, and left none but malignant passions in their stead. But the second quarter, things changed their faces. There must indeed be almost a mathematical equality in the human intellect, if in a school of nearly 100 scholars, one or two do not, by superior genius, take the lead of the rest. The children soon found that all of them could not obtain the medal; and the contention continued sometimes among three, but seldom with more than two. But although the contention was generally confined to two, yet the ill effects produced by the general contention of the first quarter still remained, and discord as generally prevailed. But more, the medal never failed to ruin the one who gained it, and who was never worth a farthing afterwards; having gained the object of his ambition, he conceived there

was

was no need of further exertion, or even of showing a decent respect either to his tutor, or his schoolmates ; and if the losing competitor happened to be a girl, she sometimes left the school in tears, and could never be prevailed upon to enter it afterwards.

Those are the effects of Medals, as they operated on the school; but they extended their mischief still further. The flame of jealousy was kindled in the breasts of the mothers, who charged the master with partiality in the distribution of the medals, although they were adjudged by four or five indifferent persons of merit in the town. And although the tutor uniformly refused to give his opinion on the merit of any performance, and care was taken that the authors of none of the performances were known by the persons who adjudged the prize.

To conclude, to make men happy, the first step is to make them independent. For if they are dependent, they can neither manage their private concerns properly, retain their own dignity, or vote impartially for their country : they can be but tools at best. And to make them independent, to repeat Mr. Webster's words, two regulations are essentially necessary. First such a distribution of lands and principles of descent and alienation

alienation as shall give every citizen a power of acquiring what his industry merits. Secondly, such a system of Education, as gives every citizen an opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and fitting himself for places of trust. It is said that men of property are the fittest persons to represent their country, because they have least reason to betray it. If the observation is just, every man should have property, that none be left to betray their country. "It has been observed, that the inhabitants in mountains are strongly attached to their country, which probably arises from the division of lands, in which, generally speaking, all have an interest. In this, the Biscayner's, exceed all other states, looking with fondness on their hills, as the most delightful scenes in the world, and their people as the most respectable, descended from the aborigines of Spain. This prepossession excites them to the most extraordinary labor, and to execute things far beyond what could be expected, in so small and rugged a country, where they have few branches of commerce. I cannot give a greater proof of their industry, than those fine roads they have now made from Bilboa to Castile, as well as in Guypuscoa and Alaba. When one sees the passage over the tremendous mountains of Orduna, one cannot behold it without the utmost surprize and admiration." It is with infinite satisfaction that I have seen a similar sentiment adopted by the court of errors and appeals

peals, in the Delaware state, in the case of Benjamin Robinson and William Robinson appellants, against the lessee of John Adams, respondent. "Estates in fee tail," say the court, "are not liable to division by will, or upon intestacy, as estates in fee simple are; & those distributions are very beneficial.* It is much to be wished that every citizen could possess a freehold, though some of them might happen to be small. Such a disposition of property cherishes domestic happiness, endears a country to its inhabitants, and promotes the general welfare. But what ever influence such reflections might have upon us, on other occasions, they can have but little if any on the present, for reasons that will hereafter appear."

From the last sentence in the foregoing paragraph, and the note beneath, it would appear that this republican sentiment was introduced by the court, not from any immediate relation, re-

* "It is greatly to be desired that the persons appointed by our courts, for viewing and dividing lands among the children of intestates, would not suffer themselves so easily to be prevailed upon to report, that the lands will not bear a division. Thus, very often, an estate is adjudged as incapable of division, to one of the children, that might well be divided into five or six, if not more farms, as large as many in the Eastern states; upon which the industrious and prudent owners live happily. By the usual way of proceeding among us, one of the children is involved in a heavy debt, that frequently proves ruinous to him; or if the debt of valuation is paid to the other children, it is in a number of such trifling sums, and at such distances of time, one from another, that they are of very little use to those who receive them. This matter deserves very serious consideration."

ference, or application, which it had to the cause under consideration, but merely that it might be generally diffused.

And now, my fellow citizens, having thus, tho' in an indigested manner, shewn you the great cause of all the evils attendant on an abuse of Civilization; it remains with you to apply the remedy. Let it not be said, when we shall be no more, that the descendants of an Eastern nation, landed in this Western world, attacked the defenceless natives, and "divorced them in anguish, from the bosom of their country," only to establish narrow and unequitable policies, such as the governments of our forefathers were. But let us, since so much evil has been done, endeavour that some good may come of it.— Let us keep nature in view, and form our policy rather by the fitness of things, than by a blind adherence to contemptible precedents from arbitrary and corrupt governments. Let us begin by perfecting the system of education, as the proper foundation whereon to erect a temple to liberty, and to establish a wise, equitable and durable policy; that our country may become *indeed* an asylum to the distressed of every clime—the abode of liberty, peace, virtue and happiness—a land on which the Deity may deign to look down with approbation—and whose government may last till time shall be no more!

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

In Page 35, Line 3, for *pawn* read *palan*.
Page 49, Line 12, for *spur* read *sucre*.

Delaware District, &c.

BE it remembered, that on the eighth Day of February, in the fifteenth Year of the Independence of the United States of America, Robert Coram, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office, the Title of a Book, the Right whereof he claims, as Author, in the Words following, to wit:

“POLITICAL INQUIRIES; to
“which is added, a PLAN for the general ESTA-
“BLISHMENT of SCHOOLS throughout the Uni-
“ted States, by ROBERT CORAM, *Author of some*
“*late Pieces in the Delaware Gazette, under the*
“*Signature of Brutus.*”—In Conformity to the Act
of the Congress of the United States, entitled,
“An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by
“securing the Copies of Maps, Charts, and Books,
“to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies,
“during the Times therein mentioned.”

MATTHEW PEARCE,

Clk. of the District of Delaware.